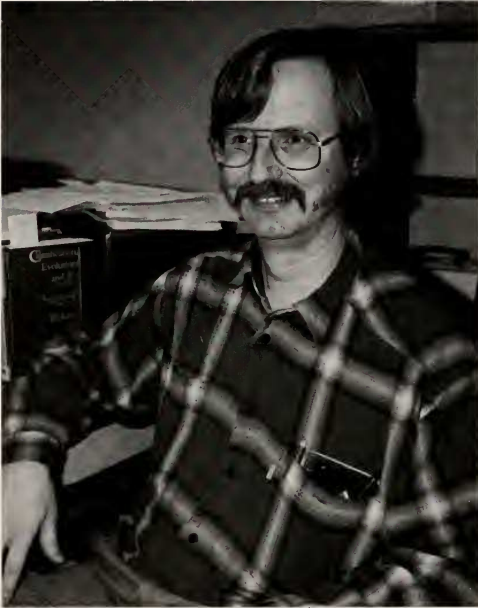


## In Memoriam



BYRON ALLEN ALEXANDER  
1952-1996

Research on the systematics, behavior and morphology of bees and sphecid wasps suffered a tragic loss with the sudden and unanticipated death of a promising young investigator, Byron Alexander, on November 30, 1996. His brief professional career of only seven years was one of impressive scholarly productivity

in addition to his teaching and curatorial duties. Byron was an associate professor in the Department of Entomology and the Department of Systematics and Ecology at the University of Kansas, as well as a half-time curator in the Snow Entomological Collection of the Natural History Museum. He had contributed two important

papers to the *Journal of Hymenoptera Research*.

Byron was most importantly an enthusiastic and capable teacher. On a regular cycle, he taught insect classification, external morphology of insects, social insects and introductory systematics. In addition, he had taught two undergraduate biology courses and a summer field course in entomology. In the summer of 1990, he co-taught a field course on bee behavior and ecology at the Centro de Ecología, Hermosillo, Mexico; and in 1994 he taught in a course on identification of Hymenoptera, sponsored by the University of Hawaii and the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Students regarded his courses highly, and he had received an award for outstanding teaching while at Cornell University.

He was both a student of the natural history of insects and a practitioner of the most up-to-date computer methods in the cladistic analysis of various groups of Hymenoptera. Another of his interests was morphology of bees and wasps, particularly of the female reproductive system. His research was supported, at one time or another, by the National Science Foundation, a Smithsonian Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, and the General Research Fund of the University of Kansas.

Byron was an artist of unusual talent. Examples of his artistic work may be seen in his last publication, "Comparative Morphology of the Female Reproductive System of Nomadine Bees" (*Mem. Entomol. Soc. Washington*, no. 17, pp. 14-35, 1996). Earlier, he had exhibited drawings at a national meeting of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators (in 1984) and at the Eastern Branch meeting of the Entomological Society of America, in Syracuse, New York (1988). He made the illustrations for "The Natural History and Behavior of the North American Beewolves," a book by Howard Evans and Kevin O'Neill (1988). While working for the National Park Ser-

vice, he illustrated brochures on wildlife of the parks.

Byron Allen Alexander was born in El Paso, Texas, on April 14, 1952, the son of Harold and Betty Alexander. He attended the University of Texas at El Paso and graduated with highest honors in 1974. Fascinated by the work of Jane Goodall in Tanzania, he enrolled in a graduate program in primatology at Stanford University. The program was discontinued after a year; however, Byron had an opportunity to study chimpanzees in Senegal with a group of Scottish primatologists. After only six months in Africa, he contracted hepatitis and had to return to the United States. In 1976 and in 1978-1981, he was employed as a seasonal park naturalist, at Capitol Reef National Park, Utah, Great Sand Dunes National Monument, Colorado, and Tuzigoot National Monument, Arizona. During this period, Byron's interest in entomology and particularly in wasp behavior, was stimulated by his contacts with students of Prof. Howard Evans of Colorado State University. Thus influenced indirectly by hymenopterist-behaviorist Evans, he went to Colorado State University and there earned the M.S. degree in 1983. He continued graduate studies with George Eickwort at Cornell University. At Cornell, Byron was awarded the John Henry Comstock Scholarship, a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship and three other fellowships. He received the Ph.D. degree from Cornell in 1989, and in the summer of that year joined the Entomology faculty at the University of Kansas, as an assistant professor. He was promoted to associate professor, with tenure, in 1995.

In addition to his membership in the International Society of Hymenopterists, Byron was active in the Entomological Society of America (associate editor of the *Thomas Say Publications in Entomology*, since 1994), the Central States Entomological Society (president in 1995, member of the editorial board since 1994), the Animal

Behavior Society, the International Union for the Study of Social Insects, the Society of Systematic Biology, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society.

Byron is survived by his parents, Prof. and Mrs. Harold Alexander of El Paso, Texas and two brothers, Harold, of Las Cruces, New Mexico and David, of Portland, Oregon. A memorial service was held in the Natural History Museum, University of Kansas, on December 5, 1996. At this service, it was evident that Byron had many friends, some of whom (former students and others) had come from distant parts of the country to pay their final respects to this unusual man.

A memorial fund in Byron's name has been established with the Kansas University Endowment Association, to keep his memory alive and to benefit entomology students, to whom he had devoted most of his professional career.

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